1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

PREFACE

114 During the years from 1911 to 1922 I lived as a missionary in the frontier region of Hsining in Northwest China. Among the peoples living in the region there were Chinese, Tibetans, Turkish-speaking Salars, Chinese-speaking Muslims, and a people who call themselves Monguors, and are called by the Chinese *T'u-jen,* a name that means "autochthones." Of these, I was most interested in the Monguors. The present study is drawn from notes written down at that time as well as from information in the local Chinese annals of the cities of the region and the annals of the Province of Kansu. During the years that I lived in the region, Hsining was the most important city of the Tibetan frontier of the Province of Kansu. It was only in 1928 that the vast frontier district was detached and formed into the new Province of Ch'inghai, with Hsining as its capital. (The Chinese name Ch'inghai is a translation of the Mongol name Kuke Nuur, Blue Lake, also rendered as Kukunor or Kokonor, the name of one of the outstanding geographical features of the region.)

It was in the winter of 1909 that I arrived in Kansu Province. This was the first year of the period of Hsüan T'ung when the "boy Emperor" P'u I, last of the Manchu sovereigns, ascended the throne. The Empire still had an external appearance of power and grandeur, but in less than three years it collapsed, the Emperor was forced to abdicate, and there began a long period of trouble and civil war. In 1911, the year of the Chinese Revolution, I was assigned to Hsining and studied Tibetan for half a year in the famous lamasery of Kumbum. I was then sent to a mission stationed in the sub-prefecture of Nienpei, forty-five miles east of Hsining, where I continued the study of Tibetan for four years.

The Monguor people, with whom I came in contact in the course of my work as a missionary, seemed to me to be more interesting than the Tibetan tribes. All kinds of conflicting and incredible tales were current about their mysterious origin and their social organization, and very little was known about them. Having studied the history of religions and anthropology at the University of Louvain, and having studied the religions of China and taken the courses in Chinese at the University of Leiden in Holland, from 1908 to 1909, I was predisposed to be fascinated by the problem of the Monguors.

114 Later I was transferred to the mission station of Hsining, where I was in charge of more than thirty small
• 123 mission stations scattered all over the prefecture. I was in daily contact with Chinese, Monguors, and Tibetans, and had an opportunity to jot down notes from first hand observations. Some of the Christians were subjects of Monguor *T'u-ssu* or "native chiefs," and lived in Monguor villages. As a missionary, moreover, I had a certain amount of medical work to do, and in the course of this kind of work one gains the heart and confidence of the people and becomes conversant with their most inti-

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mate personal and family problems. It so happened that during this period I was teaching geometry and algebra to the son of the highest-ranking Chinese city official of the prefecture, and thus had an opportunity to become well acquainted with all the Chinese officials and scholars of the city. As a consequence, I was often asked by village headmen, by Tibetan and Monguor *T'u-ssu*, and by the heads of lamaseries, to help them by explaining their problems to the Chinese officials and acting as a friendly intermediary on their behalf.

Thus for a period of years my associations with Monguors were close and cordial and it was possible for me to learn something about them. On account of the pressure of my daily work, however, it was not possible at that time for me to prepare my material for publication. All that I could do was to make notes from my daily observations and scan the Chinese annals of the region. In 1922 I was transferred to the mission of Ninghsia on the borders of the Alashan Mongol Territory. In 1927–28 I went to Europe to recover from a debility caused by malaria. Returning to China, I spent the years from 1928 to 1947 in charge of different mission stations in the Hou-t'ao region on the northern edge of the Ordos Mongol territory, and could not be released to prepare publications, because of the shortage of missionaries and the trying times in which we were living. More than once I had to bury my notes and photographs, along with my other possessions, for fear of local bandits and, in later years, for fear of Japanese raids. Finally in March 1948 I arrived in Peking, hoping to prepare my material for publication. On the way, the train carrying my papers was looted by Chinese Communists in T'u-mu. One-third of the cases disappeared. Fortunately most of my notes were saved, though most of the photographs were lost.

In November 1948, the political and military situation in Peking having become much worse, I came to Washington in order to finish the preparation of my material and to continue research work, making use of Chinese sources in the Library of Congress. In 1949–50 Mr. Owen Lattimore invited me to take part in the program of research on the Mongol region under his direction at the Page School of International Relations at the Johns Hopkins University, under a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. In the following academic year 1950–51 I received a grant from the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia to enable me to complete my work. It is a pleasure to be able to acknowledge, with the appearance of this publication, my indebtedness to the Carnegie Corporation, the American Philosophical Society, my American and Mongol colleagues at the Johns Hopkins, and especially the time and care which Mr. H. H. Vreeland 3rd devoted to helping me in the preparation of the manuscript, and Mr. Lattimore's assistance in the final editing.

[p. 1-b]

[8 cont.]

114 Scheutvelder missionaries had again given up their Kansu region,
[797] which they left to the Steyler missionaries. After their departure the investigation of the Tujen again came to a halt. The language was already fairly well understood, but records of the rich folk literature and a comparison with the other Tujen dialects in Kansu were lacking. A good foundation had likewise been laid for the sociology. The other spheres, however, had not yet been considered, above all the religion and material culture (economy, clothing).

121 When the author came to this region in 1946, he intended
[177] to begin with precisely these points. The Tujen were already Sinicized to a considerable extent, but in their language, religion, and dress they were able to maintain much of their individuality until the most recent times. Therefore, in particular the legends and songs were taken down, the religious customs studied, and the dress of the Tujen women described. What seemed most interesting to the author was the religion, which is to be dealt with in the following work. The presentation is not definitive, as will become clear repeatedly below, but it does provide the fundamentals and essentials.

115 Since there are almost no written reports on this subject,
123 the author had to utilize the living sources that were available to him during his three-year stay (until 1949), in addition to his own observations. The principal one was an outstanding Tujen man, a living book concerning his people's traditions, and a Tujen singer with an enormous treasure of legends, fairy tales, and songs.

128 The work falls into two parts. The first is a critical presentation of the facts gained from the sources, and by way of introduction the chief source itself (the informant) is to be characterized. The second part presents the theoretical results derived from these facts, namely, the attempt to draw a total picture of the religion and to show the layers out of which it is formed. Hence it is not simply an offhand field report, but is also a systematic survey of the religious situation and its explanation. It is to be regretted that this work had to be
114 broken off at the site because of the suddenly erupting unrest;

[11 cont.]

114 leave of these dear people, for only a few weeks, we thought.
[115] In actual fact, however, I was not to see them again. In the autumn of the same year old Tuo died and with him a portion of ancient knowledge sank into the grave.

My reports concerning the life of the Tujen are therefore incomplete, because prematurely broken off. Also, the work of
124 collecting did not proceed in order. At one time the two dictated only songs. At another time the old man told me about the customs; then I would have to be gone for a number of weeks; then again the work in the fields was so pressing that they stayed away for months. In the meantime I was able to observe a number of things myself and to check on the reports, or I met other Tujen and had them tell me things.

115 Time and again I found that the reports of the old man
124 were the most precise, the most ample, and the most reliable. Once, when I was able to observe a part of the puberty rite, the old man asked me immediately: "Well, how was it? Is it not true that I related everything correctly?" He took the position: "As an old man I do not lie anymore." Occasionally he would also say: "What I say is true; what I do not know, I do not say. Everything I tell you, I myself have experienced, led, and seen at home. Ask the others." He would also warn me about others: "What that one says is not quite accurate, he exaggerates; he is still a young man." Even among his compatriots old Tuo was regarded as an honest man; his classmate in particular emphasized his reliability. He even expressed his opinion to me whenever I said I had seen something in such and such a way: "Father, you have made a mistake." Glossing anything over for my sake was scarcely to be observed.

115 [12] Once, when he was gravely ill and unable to get up
123 for several months, I said in front of others: "What a pity if old Tuo were to die; he is such an honest, good man." This was later reported to him and it pleased him greatly. As I was once able to observe from my room without being noticed, it confirmed him in his sense of honor: "What? The Father says that I am an honest man. I owe it to myself to speak the truth."

The chief inhibition on his part consisted of the fear of ridicule. It was a long time before he was certain that I

[12 cont.]

115 123 respected their customs and did not condemn them or brand them as backward superstitions. In this respect one cannot in the long run disguise his feelings. With a sure sense the natives noticed whether one meets them with good will and respect or regards himself as superior to them. Since the old man was no dolt and had also read many a Chinese book, he knew, for example, that the Chinese tend to dismiss the peoples on their borders as [181] barbarians. He also knew how the Chinese nearby laugh at the Tujen as backward "natives." And finally he had heard that the Christians designate as superstition much that is dear and sacred to the Tujen and the Chinese. Thus it is understandable that occasionally he would say: "Father, do not be surprised when I tell you such and such. We believe in it." Or: "Please do not laugh at it when we do something in such a way." On his part, this inhibition was extensively bridged by the genuinely tolerant [829] attitude of the Asiatic: "All religions are good. The goal is the same, only the ways are different." On my part, the decisive attitude was that every person's conviction is to be respected if he means it honestly, even though, objectively speaking, he may be on the wrong road. The same applies to religion. And when I told the old man, "I believe such and such, you believe such and such, but I am not therefore better than you; it depends upon the conscience," he gladly agreed. Nor was any attempt ever made to influence him in his religion. He knew little about Christianity, but neither did he regard it as mystery-mongering when he inquired about it among my people. They always stressed to him: "You can hear and see everything that we do. We have no secret religion. We tell you everything. If you want to read our books, you may have them." One day he came with the question: "Should I not become a Christian?" I told him: "That depends on you. The heart of a man cannot be forced. Everyone should act according to his insight."

115 171 It greatly cheered his openheartedness to find many a similarity between the Christian and Tujen ceremonies. Thus he was quite surprised at the fire ceremony on Easter eve. In the church he saw altars, saints' images, an oil lamp. He saw how the Christians fell on their knees. He knew: We, too,

[12 cont.]

115 sacrifice bread and wine, we, too, had a lord of heaven, we, too,
171 had a holy mother; we, too, burned incense, had consecrated water, blessed houses and cattle; we, too, prayed for the sick and anointed them with oil; we, too, had a baptism; we, too, had a procession through the meadow and prayed for the blessings of good weather; [13] we, too, had a redeemer similar to their Geser; we, too, had temples with solemn prayer and divine service; we, too, had monks and nuns; we, too, had good angels and evil demons.

115 Thus the old man felt more and more at home in our surroundings, even though he no longer spoke of becoming a Christian. In the end his judgment was: "Your religion is better. You help man."

•123 As a result of our mutual genuine respect, the old man put me in the right light in his circle of acquaintances, above all among the lamas. They regarded me as one who has religion himself and does not make fun of their gods and monks. Accordingly I was invited one day by a Tujen family to serve as "prayer-sayer" for a funeral service, which, however, I declined. When I entered the Tujen lamasery, the monks assigned me a clean room for the Mass. They understood when I requested pure water for the "sacrifice," and when I preferred not to be interrupted. Then I placed a cross before the images of the Lamaist deities and in the presence of the curious but silent lamas I celebrated the Mass. And just as I never expected the people to kneel, for instance, or to give any other signs of reverence, so they never expected a similar courtesy from us.

[609] By the way, certain travelers report how they had their fortunes told or how they were blessed by this or that hutukhtu, and the like, this makes little impression upon the populace, aside from the fact that the people see through such conduct and often regard it merely as a superfluous gesture of courtesy.

115 In spite of the fact that as the result of this highly satis-
123 factory relationship I was able to see and hear all kinds of things, I am well aware that I by no means learned everything. No one likes to tell a foreigner about all the darker sides of his people or ticklish things. Nor was anything else to be expected in

[13 cont.]

123 115 [888] view of the highly developed sense of honor of the old man. For instance, he could not be persuaded to dictate the well-known mountain songs which often contain quite crude observations. On such occasions he would say: "For an old man like me this is not fitting, nor is it for you. Yes, when I was younger . . . "Actually, younger people are freer in this respect. But even then they will ask: "Are there no women nearby?" It is not to be overlooked that the old man knew very well that my notations were also to go abroad. He told me about the informant of Father De Smedt, who helped the latter to write books and had even been far away in Mongolia. -- Ordinary uneducated farmers are easily satisfied with the observation: "If you came to Europe, would you not ask what they eat and drink there and what peculiar customs they have? What kind of songs they sing, what gods they worship?" And in fact one can often hear the people say: K'an i-ko jê-nao, k'an i-ko hsi-ch'a, that is, "Let us take a look at the excitement and see what is extraordinary." In view of the ethnic and religious mixture in Tsinghai, the people are in this respect much more generous.

The old man immediately understood that my notations would form a book. And he was proud of helping with it: "You Europeans are to be admired. We Tujen do nothing [14] to preserve our history for our descendants. In some ten years we will have become Chinese; then nothing more will be known of our language, our customs, our religion. And you want to write down everything now so that nothing will be forgotten; your service is great."

115 124 Another obstacle in taking notes was the informant's age. He tired very easily, made digressions, and at times would interrupt the most interesting narrative by suddenly asking: "Is your father still alive? How old is he? Are you going to Koko Nor shortly?" -- and then everything would lapse into a purposeless digressive conversation. Or he would suddenly feel unwell, would want to go to sleep at once, etc. Apparently he had the following attitude: I am the guest here of a good acquaintance, just as with my kin group; we talk about this and that, go home when we want, and come back... Accordingly, it also happened that he showed up when I was not at home, merely to visit the

[639 cont.]

764 782 792 The official prayer-service is undertaken by a lama, if possible by a hutukhtu. He is given a room of his own in the house of mourning, which ordinarily immediately adjoins the room in which the corpse is laid out, so that he can remain on the kang when he recites the office of the dead. A lama never prays directly before the corpse. A hutukhtu visits the house of mourning only on the day before the cremation, and stays there only one night. He also always undertakes the ceremonial cremation with the fire-pouring. Other lamas, on the other hand, may perform services in the house of mourning several days before.

[177] In recent times the Tujen also invite Chinese bonzes for the prayers. They adhere to their own rites. It also happens that bonzes and lamas are invited at the same time. Then the prayer rite is mixed. A cremation, however, is never carried out without some religious officiant first giving the prayers for the dead (12). Lamas of lower rank, who may not undertake the

12. [Foreign text p. 654.] The Tujen have no difficulties in inviting representatives of various religions for prayers. I was even requested once to give the Christian office of the dead. -- On the other hand, the Chinese Buddhists also invite the lamas to give prayers for the dead.

[123]

fire-pouring, or bonzes do not go along to the place of cremation, but remain in the house of mourning.

764 782 792 465 [604] For the prayer, the relatives, lamas, and bonzes receive a corresponding honorarium which is usually fixed by the mother's brother on the occasion of the demand for an accounting during the last mourning meal. The Chinese bonzes, to be sure, demand a fixed fee immediately upon being invited; otherwise they do not come at all. The other persons who say prayers, assistants at the cremation, etc. receive compensation in the form of alms on the eve of the cremation or on the morning after the cremation.

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gram of studies, elaborately built up and highly vaunted, and the knowledge and education sometimes attributed to the lamas in Tibet and Mongolia. My opinions seem to be justified by the opinions of other authors, who have lived for years among the lamas, knowing their language and being themselves Buddhists. 792 873 794

The learned Buddhist, Mme Alexandra David-Neel, who lived in the lamaseries of Tibet and Huang-chung for many years, knew the language very well and was always sympathetic to the lamas, giving "philosophical" justifications for much questionable behavior, but she confesses: 792 157 829

> At the morning exercise are intermixed subtle philosophy with commercialism, high spirituality with feverish pursuit of vile satisfactions, which are impossible to separate from each other; novices, educated in this whirlpool of contrary influences, follow one or another of them, according to their nature and the direction given to them by their master.[14] In Tibet the clerical education has produced only a "small number" of selected literary men, a "large number" of slothful brutes, joyous, gay fellows, and picturesque blusterers, and all these various characteristics, if they do not show up in every lama, are at least "simultaneously deeply ingrained in the nature of all of them."[15]

Kawaguchi, a learned Japanese Buddhist monk, who went to Lhasa to study Lamaism in the learned centers of Tibet, states that they graduate from the college after having studied for twenty-one years; they study especially the Buddhist Catechism and philosophy. They are from thirty to thirty-six years of age when they graduate.[16] It may safely be said that their purpose in entering the priesthood is only to procure the largest possible amount of fortune as well as the highest possible fame in that entirely secluded world of theirs. They do not seek religious truths or practice religious austerities for the work of delivering men and leading them to salvation, but they study to acquire fame, wealth, and influence, and there is nothing deep in their religious life, and 999 out of 1,000 have no conception of the problems of future life.[17] He states also that their faith is a veritable mass of superstition.[18]

These two learned Buddhists seem to confirm my suspicions and to reveal the philosophy and the behavior of the lama institutions. They corroborate my own observations, made at various institutions during the same span of time. A single fact may account only for the mentality of a single man; a multitude of facts, however, reveal the mentality of an entire corporation.[19] [123]

[14] Alexandra David-Neel, *Mystiques et magiciens du Tibet*, 95.

[15] David-Neel, *op. cit.*, 96.

[16] Ekai Kawaguchi, *Three years in Tibet*, 291, Adyar, Madras, Japan, 1909.

[17] *Ibid.*, 348.

[18] *Ibid.*, 560.

[19] Vreeland, *op. cit.*, 108, *sq.*, gives interesting comparative data concerning the lamas and their behavior in the lamaseries situated in the Gobi Desert in the Narobanchin territory.

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he honored, and the rites he performed. It will afford an opportunity to study a shamanism influenced by Taoism, honoring Taoist gods, but conserving its original character and living congenially with Taoism. The suppleness of shamanism which, according to the circumstances, adapts itself as well to Lamaism as to Taoism, adopting heterodox doctrines and honoring alien gods,[1] challenges belief. However, it discloses the power of which it disposes, conserving its original rites which betray its origin and basic character. It is interesting to note how rites resist the wear of time better than doctrines.

The facts were all gathered during the ten years I lived among the Monguors, and were checked many times by shamans, chiefs and elders of villages, men and women, and children in the schools, all of whom had attended shamanist rites their whole life long. I attended their rites several times. Since I was best acquainted with the rites of the region situated north of the Hsining River, most of the facts concern that region.

The Mongols call the shamans *BŐ*, the Monguors call them *BŐ*, on account of the lack of the vowel Ö in their dialect. *BŐ* and *BŐ* seem to be a genuine Mongol term. The Chinese of Huang-chung call them *Fa-Shih*, "Master of Magic."

It is not easy to give a definition of shamanism and of shamans who live in a world beset with innumerable good and evil spirits with which the objective of their life is to deal.

The study of shamanism is still very confused, and authors are even unable to find a definition with which they will all agree. W. Schmidt defines the shaman as "a man who is supposed to have the power of making his own person a dwelling place for the spirits, who will speak out of him, but he keeps the power to dominate those spirits and to subdue them to his own will and wishes."[2]

Mircea Eliade, describing the shamanism of Asia, stresses primarily the phenomena of ecstasies and of trance, by means of which the shamans enter in communication with all kinds of spirits—originally with the Supreme Spirit of Heaven, who corresponds morphologically with the Supreme Spirits of the archaic religions—and with the souls of ancestors and the departed. This communication with spirits, residing in the three worlds (heaven, earth, underworld) is symbolized by ascensions to heaven of the shaman or descents into the underworld, the calling down of spirits along the rope or the ladder. The basic element of shamanism consists not of the incorporation of spirits

[1] Walter Heissig, Schamanen und Geisterbeschwörer im Küriye-Banner, *Folklore Studies*, Catholic University of Peking, 3: 1, 1944. This very interesting study reveals the way shamanism adapted itself to Lamaism.

[2] W. Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, Freiburg in der Schweiz, Paulus Verlag, 9: 243, 1949.